

In Wake of Record Home Heating Costs, Over 2,200 Long Island Households on Waiting List for Assistance

After Blasting Bush Administration for Eliminating Weatherization Assistance Program, Israel Tours Home that Lowered Energy Costs through Program



Smithtown, NY—On Tuesday, U.S. Congressman Steve Israel toured a weatherized Smithtown home while calling for the restoration of the weatherization assistance program, a vital program that helps qualifying homeowners lower utility costs through making improvements to the energy efficiency of their homes. In the wake of cold temperatures and record high home heating costs, over 2,200 Long Island households are on the waiting list for weatherization assistance, a program that President Bush has eliminated in his 2009 budget proposal. Congressman Israel, who serves on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy which sets funding levels for the weatherization assistance, called for a restoration of this vital program.

“President Bush has delivered an unwelcome one-two punch for Long Island households seeking to reduce their energy costs and afford to stay in their homes,” said Congressman Israel, a Member of House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water. “First, home heating oil prices have risen 200 percent since President Bush took office. Now, the President is seeking to eliminate the weatherization assistance program, which has helped over 12,000 Long Island households lower their energy bills.”

“Currently, CDC has approximately 2,200 Long Islanders waiting to receive weatherization assistance for their homes,” explained Marianne Garvin, President of the Community Development Corporation of Long Island. “Three to five people are added to our list each day. As the list continues to grow, we must ensure that the funding is available to support this critical program. Because of federal cuts to the program, we are unable to keep up with the number of Long Islanders eligible to receive these services. CDC is extremely grateful to Congressman

Israel for supporting our need to provide homeowners with the means to keep their homes for many years to come.”

On Tuesday, Congressman Israel toured the Smithtown home of Donna Lanz, one of the over 12,000 Long Island homeowners that have reduced their energy costs by installing energy efficient appliances and improving insulation through weatherization assistance. Through the Weatherization Assistance Program, CDC provided Donna’s home with new thermo-pane windows, weather stripping, insulation, caulking, and foaming around heat and water pipes. The oil burner was fitted with a new flue and received a cleaning and tune-up.

“In the past, I worried every time I had to turn up the heat,” said Ms. Lanz. “Now, with CDC’s help, I keep the heat set at 65 degrees and I’m able to enjoy a warm home.”

The Weatherization Assistance Grant Program enables low-income families to reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. It is America’s longest running, and perhaps most successful energy efficiency program. During the last 30 years, the Weatherization Assistance Program has provided weatherization services to more than 5.5 million low-income families. On average, weatherization reduces heating bills by 31% and overall energy bills by \$358 per year. Through the CDC, Long Islanders can participate in the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal’s Weatherization Assistance Program funded nationally by the U.S. Department of Energy. A CDC energy inspector performs a home audit to identify specific needs and CDC skilled personnel implement various energy-saving improvements. These can include the installation energy saving appliances or windows, weather stripping, insulation, foaming around heat and water pipes, air sealing, and chimney sweeps.

The President’s Fiscal Year 2009 budget provides no funding for weatherization assistance, thereby eliminating the program. Last week at an Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee hearing, Congressman Israel excoriated Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman over the proposed elimination of the weatherization assistance program. At the hearing, Israel announced his intentions to restore funding for the program for 2009.